

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3071

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 00987

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL

REF: BRUSSELS 948

1. IN FEBRUARY 4 DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL, THEY INFORMED US THAT PORTUGUESE EMBASSY IN BRUSSELSHAD APPROACHED THEM ON QUESTION OF ABSENTEE VOTING BY PORTUGUESE EMIGRE WORKERS. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 8,000 PORTUGUESE WORKING IN BELGIUM WHO WOULD BE QUALIFIED TO VOTE, ACCORDING TO PORTUGUESE ESTIMATES. PORTUGUESE EMBASSY ORIGINALLY ASKED WHETHER BELGIAN OFFICIALS WOULD PERMIT MASS POLITICAL MEETINGS IN LEASED PREMISES. BELGIANS COUNSELLED AGAINST HOLDING SUCH MEETINGS. PORTUGUESE OBTAINED BELGIAN PERMISSION TO PUBLICIZE AND HOLD BALLOTING AT THEIR EMBASSY.

2. BELGIANS BELIEVE THAT LARGE MAJORITY OF PORTUGUESE WORKING IN BELGIUM WOULD VOTE FOR MODERATE PARTIES. THEY INTERPRET CUNHAL'S OBJECTION TO ABSENTEE VOTING BY PORTUGUESE EMIGRES ON PRETEXT THAT US AND BRAZIL HAVE ALLEGEDLY REFUSED COMMUNIST PARTYVISAS (PARA 2 REFTEL)

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AS ATTEMPT TO ELIMINATE THIS ANTI-COMMUNIST

VOTE. BELGIANS BELIEVE THAT VOTING FOR CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY WILL PROVIDE KEY CLUE TO FUTURE POLITICAL
EVOLUTION OF PORTUGAL. ATTEMPTS BY FOREIGN MINISTRY
TO GET BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO OFFER UNSPECIFIED BILATERAL
ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL NOW HAS BEEN TURNED DOWN UNTIL
RESULTS OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY VOTING ARE ANALYZED.
RENNER

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